

Message Text

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71-60

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00

A-01 SY-05 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 FEA-01

OES-06 EB-07 COME-00 XMB-02 /092 W
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O R 102128Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8838

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SANTO DOMINGO 5513

DEPT PASS EXIMBANK/EDWAR J O'CONNOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, DR

SUBJ: ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS OF ELECTRIC POWER PLANT
EXPLOSION

REF: A) SANTO DOMINGO 5498, B) SANTO DOMINGO A-99

1. THE EXPLOSION AT THE HAINA ELECTRIC POWER PLANT THIS MORNING WHICH WOUNDED 16 PEOPLE, HAS DESTROYED 75 PERCENT OF THE HAINA ONE UNIT (ABOUT DOLS 10 MILLION DAMAGE) AND 50 PERCENT OF HAINA TWO, (FOR ABOUT DOLS 5 MILLION DAMAGE). EACH UNIT ORIGINALLY PRODUCED 50 MEGAWATTS (MW) BUT THE TWO TOGETHER WERE CURRENTLY PRODUCING ABOUT 65 MW BECAUSE OF LACK OF MAINTENANCE. IT WILL PROBABLY TAKE A YEAR TO REBUILD HAINA ONE AND SIX MONTHS TO REBUILD HAINA TWO.

2. THE EXPLOSION CAUSED AN IMMEDIATE NATIONWIDE OUTAGE, BUT POWER WAS SOON RESTORED TO VARIOUS SECTORS. LARGE AREAS OF SANTO DOMINGO, HOWEVER, HAVE REMAINED WITHOUT POWER OR WATER

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THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

3. THE 65-MW LOSS TO THE NATIONAL GRID WILL REPRESENT ANOTHER SERIOUS DEFICIT UNTIL THE NEW HAINA FOUR (80 MW) COME ON STREAM DECEMBER 21. THE LOSS ALSO MEANS THAT THE SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT IN THE OVERALL POWER SITUATION PREDICTED FOR NEXT SUMMER IN REPAIR B PROBABLY WILL NOT RPT NOT MATERIALIZE.

4. THE CAUSE OF THE EXPLOSION IS UNKNOWN BUT IT IS PROBABLY DUE TO LACK OF MAINTENANCE. THE UNIT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SHUT DOWN LAST MONTH AFTER HAINA THREE CAME INTO OPERATION IN AUGUST, BUT THIS DID NOT RPT NOT HAPPEN. IN FACT, IT HAS NOT BEEN SHUT DOWN FOR MAINTENANCE SINCE IT BEGAN OPERATING NINE YEARS AGO.

5. THE BOILER OF HAINA ONE IS COMPLETELY DESTROYED, AS IS A GREAT DEAL OF THE AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT. SINCE AN ACCOMPANYING FIRE OF COMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL ON THE WHARF NEXT TO THE PLANT COMPLICATED THE SITUATION, THE UNIT COULD NOT RPT NOT BE COOLED DOWN PROPERLY SO THAT A NEW GENERATOR MAY BE NECESSARY. THE DAMAGE TO UNIT TWO APPEARS TO BE MORE IN THE BOILER THAN IN THE GENERATOR. FLYING METAL AND DEBRIS STRUCK THE BOILER OF THE NEW HAINA THREE, BUT IT IS NOT RPT NOT VERY HEAVILY DAMAGED AND CAN APPARENTLY BE OPERATIVE AGAIN SHORTLY.

6. THE RESPONSE OF CDE ADMINISTRATOR JULIO SAURI TO THIS LATEST ELECTRIC POWER DISASTER WILL PROBABLY INCLUDE SOME COMBINATION OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING: (1) ASK THE USG ONCE AGAIN FOR GENERATOR BARGES OR SHIPS; (2) PRESSURE US-OWNED FALCONBRIDGE ONCE AGAIN FOR ELECTRICITY; (3) START A CRASH PROGRAM OF PURCHASING GAS TURBINE GENERATORS; AND (4) PRESSURE GE TO SPEED UP THE INSTALLATION OF HAINA FOUR.

7. GENERAL ELECTRIC HAS ALREADY ARRANGED TO HAVE THE HEAD OF ITS SERVICE ORGANIZATION IN PUERTO RICO COME IMMEDIATELY TO THE DR. GE REPRESENTATIVE HERB HUNT STATES THAT THE NORMAL DELIVERY TIME FOR A BOILER SUCH AS THE ONE DESTROYED IS 18 TO 20 MONTHS, BUT THAT ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS THIS COULD PROBABLY BE SPEEDED UP TO 12 MONTHS. THE EARLIEST WHICH GAS TURBINE GENERATORS WOULD LIKELY BE OPERATING IN THE COUNTRY IF THE ORDERS WERE PLACED TODAY WOULD BE NEXT MAY. GAS TURBINES ARE MORE EXPENSIVE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PURCHASE AND OPERATE AND CDE HAS HAD VERY UNFORTUNATE EXPERIENCE WITH THEM. NEVERTHELESS, GE, CURTISS-WRIGHT, AND FRENCH-OWNED ALTHSON HAVE SUBMITTED BIDS WITHIN THE PAST FEW DAYS ON GAS UNITS.

8. IT APPEARS THAT THE ISABELA SITE FOR THE 116-MW UNITS HAS DEFINITELY BEEN DISCARDED IN FAVOR OF A SITE ON THE COAST NEAR THE OIL REFINERY AT HAINA, BUT THE CHANGE IN SITES MEANS

SEVERAL MORE MONTHS' DELAY IN BUILDING THE 116-MW UNITS.

9. IN SUM, THE ELECTRIC POWER OUTLOOK IN THE DR REMAINS GRIM.
AXELROD

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